



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/816,678	03/22/2001	Lawrence R. Guinta	5078-02500/EBM	5205
35690	7590	03/22/2007		EXAMINER
MEYERTONS, HOOD, KIVLIN, KOWERT & GOETZEL, P.C.				BOYCE, ANDRE D
700 LAVACA, SUITE 800			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
AUSTIN, TX 78701				3623
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE		MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
3 MONTHS		03/22/2007	PAPER	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/816,678	GUINTA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Andre Boyce	3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 December 2006.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-27,30-60,62-101 and 104-145 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-27,30-60,62-101 and 104-145 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. This Non-Final office action is in response to Applicant's amendment filed December 18, 2006. Claims 1, 40, 53, 71, 113 and 144 have been amended. Claims 1-27, 30-60, 62-101 and 104-145 are pending.
2. The previously pending rejection to claims 113-143 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, have been withdrawn.
3. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 67, 68, 115-117, 123-134 and 138-143 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection, however, Applicant's other arguments have been fully considered but are not persuasive.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.
5. Claims 1-24, 28-47, 49, 52-57, 61-64, 71-73, 78-99, 102-112, 144 and 145 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guinta et al (USPN 5,737,494), in view of Barton et al (US 2002/0059093).

As per claim 1, Guinta et al disclose a method of using a computer to gather information about an organizational process or system (column 2, lines 39-40),

comprising: receiving general information about an organizational process or system (i.e., gathering information about an organizational process or system, column 2, lines 38-40); at least one question is provided within a computer and displayed to assess each selected standard (i.e., as seen in figure 1, a series of issues/standards, as seen in table 1, are shown on the assessment screen, including a question with regards to the issue/standard); the question being adapted to prompt an assessor to input the assessor's perceptions of the organizational process or system; receiving a first input from an input device, the first input reflecting the assessor's perception of the organizational process or system (i.e., questions adapted to prompt an assessor to input the assessor's perception, column 5, lines 58-62); comparing within a processing unit of a computer the first input to a first value, and, if the first input has a first predetermined characteristic in relation to the first values (column 5, lines 7-9), then prompting the assessor to identify evidence that supports the first input, and if the supporting evidence is identified, then validating the first input for subsequent evaluation (column 5, lines 9-16), and if the supporting evidence is not identified, then inhibiting validation of the first input until the evidence is identified or until the first input is changed to have second predetermined characteristics in relation to the first value (column 5, lines 16-21).

Guinta et al does not explicitly disclose prompting an assessor to select at least two standards against which to assess the organizational process or system, wherein at least one of the two selected standards is a recognized industry standard prescribing system or process criteria and wherein the recognized industry standard

is selected based on the general information about the organization process or system. Barton et al disclose interviews 78 conducted with process owners for area of compliance (¶ 0059), wherein interview 78 is conducted in accordance with a question owner's matrix 100 (¶ 0062). Question owner's matrix 100 lists compliance assessment areas 102, which are presented to the assessor as selected standards, on which the assessment is based, wherein the compliance assessment areas include equal employment opportunity, antitrust, and ethical business practices (¶ 0062, figure 4). Both Guinta et al and Barton et al are concerned with organizational and compliance assessment with respect to specific issues and risks, therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include prompting an assessor to select at least two standards in Guinta et al, as seen in Barton et al, thereby giving the assessor in Guinta et al more control over the assessment process, rather than being given questions determined by a computer, thus making the system more robust and flexible.

As per claim 2, Guinta et al disclose analyzing the input to determine if one or more problem areas are present in the organizational process or system (i.e., results may be evaluated to determine problem areas, column 14, lines 52-53).

As per claims 3, 4, 34, and 38, Guinta et al does not disclose displaying remotely and displaying the at least one question across a global computer network, and providing at least one onsite assessor with a PDA. Barton et al disclose centralized database 18 stored remotely from server 12, wherein database 18 is checked out to

PDA. Further, once the data has been modified through the PDA, the data can be re-checked into database 18 from the PDA (¶ 0049). Both Guinta et al and Barton et al are concerned with gathering information concerning the performance of an organization. In addition, a wide area network, such as the internet, provides an opportunity to quickly and efficiently gather information, particularly where an organization may have various offices, therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include displaying the interface remotely and across a network, and including a PDA in Guinta et al, as seen in Barton et al, as an efficient means of delivering the information to the assessor in the Guinta et al system.

As per claim 5, Guinta et al disclose the input is a numerical input (column 5, line 58).

As per claim 6, Guinta et al disclose displaying on the display device at least one corrective action question, the at least one corrective action question being adapted to prompt the assessor to input on the input device the assessor's perception of the problem area of the organizational process or system (i.e., a series of statements or issues shown on the assessment screen, as those depicted in table 1, which includes corrective and preventable action 4.14, column 15, lines 20-23).

As per claim 7, Guinta et al disclose receiving at least one corrective action input, the at least one corrective action input being stored in the computer's memory (i.e., corrective action assessment stored in memory 110 of computer 100, figure 4).

As per claim 8, Guinta et al disclose displaying questions that are repeated within the selected standards only once (i.e., issues are presented only once, as seen in table 1).

As per claim 9, Guinta et al disclose the first predetermined characteristic is defined to mean that the first input has a value that is less than the first value, and the second predetermined characteristic is defined to mean that the first input has a value that is at least as great as the first value (column 6, lines 44-47 and column 7, lines 7-9).

As per claim 10, Guinta et al disclose the first input is on a numerical scale, the scale being 1 to 10, 1 to 100, or 0 to 100 percent (column 6, lines 28-31).

As per claim 11, Guinta et al disclose if evidence is not identified that supports the first input, then further comprising inhibiting the display of subsequent questions until the evidence is identified or until first input is changed to have the second predetermined characteristic in relation to the first value (column 6, lines 16-21).

As per claim 12, Guinta et al disclose prompting the assessor to input a second numerical input on an input device of a computer the assessor's perception of how well the organizational process or system functions to address the issue (column 6, lines 36-37), and receiving the second input from the input device, the second input being stored in a memory of the computer, and the second input reflecting the assessor's perception of the results achieved by the organizational process or system (column 6, lines 37-41).

As per claim 13, Guinta et al disclose comparing within a processing unit of a computer the second input to a second value, and, if the second input has a first predetermined characteristic in relation to the second value, then prompting the assessor to identify evidence that supports the second input (column 6, lines 50-52), and if evidence is identified that supports the second input, then validating the second input for subsequent evaluation (column 6, lines 56-60), and if the evidence is not identified that supports the second input, then inhibiting validation of the second input until the evidence is identified or until the second input is changed to have a second predetermined characteristic in relation to the second value (column 6, lines 60-65).

As per claim 14, Guinta et al disclose if evidence is not identified that supports the second input, then further comprising inhibiting the display of subsequent questions until the evidence is identified or until second input is changed to have a third predetermined characteristic in relation to the second value (column 7, lines 1-6).

As per claim 15, Guinta et al disclose evaluating the organizational process or system by comparing inputs from the assessor with known empirically-gathered information (column 3, lines 59-61).

As per claim 16, Guinta et al disclose using the first and second inputs together to evaluate the organizational process or system (column 8, lines 19-21).

As per claim 17, Guinta et al disclose multiplying the first input with the second input to evaluate the organizational process or system (column 8, lines 21-25).

As per claim 18, Guinta et al disclose using differences between the first input and the second input to evaluate the organizational process or system (column 4, lines 1-3).

As per claim 19, Guinta et al disclose receiving first and second inputs from a plurality of assessors, and determining the standard deviation of the first numerical input, and the standard deviation of the second numerical input, from the numerical inputs received from the assessors, and then using a standard deviation to evaluate at least a portion of the organizational process or system (column 8, lines 25-29).

As per claim 20, Guinta et al disclose the evidence comprises visible evidence (column 4, line 13).

As per claim 21, Guinta et al disclose the evidence comprises supporting documentation (column 4, lines 14-15).

As per claim 22, Guinta et al disclose the evidence comprises visible evidence, and further comprising comparing within a processing unit of a computer the first input to second value, and, if the first input has a first predetermined characteristic in relation to the second value, the prompting the assessor to identify supporting documentation that supports the first input (column 4, lines 15-22); and if supporting documentation is identified, then validating the first input for subsequent evaluation (column 4, lines 22-24), and if the supporting documentation is not identified, then inhibiting the validation of the first input until the supporting documentation is identified or until the first input is changed to have a second predetermined characteristic in relation to the second value (column 4, lines 24-29).

As per claim 23, Guinta et al disclose prompting the assessor to input on the input device of the computer an assessment as to whether the organizational process or system is demonstrable (column 4, lines 30-32), and, if an input is received from the input device that indicates that the organizational process or system is demonstrable, then validating the first input (column 4, lines 32-35), and, if an input is received from the input device that indicates that the organizational process or system is not demonstrable, then inhibiting validation of the first input until the assessor changes the first input to have a first determined characteristic in relation to a second value (column 4, lines 35-42).

As per claim 24, Guinta et al disclose displaying at least one input as a sliding bar on a display device (column 4, lines 43-44).

Claims 28 and 29 are rejected based upon the rejection of claim 1, since they are machine having a memory claims, corresponding to the method claim.

As per claim 30, Guinta et al disclose prompting an assessor to provided recommendations to improve the organizational process or system (i.e., on-site evaluation team to focus on 8 issues below 45% evaluation factor, column 14, lines 55-58).

As per claim 31, Guinta et al disclose prompting an assessor to provided recommendations to improve the organizational process or system by use of an user adjustable icon system, wherein selecting a value on a first user adjustable icon limits the range of values displayed for selection on a second user adjustable icon (i.e., sliding bar scale, figure 5E).

As per claim 32, Guinta et al disclose performing an onsite assessment directed to one or more problem areas determined to be present in the organizational process or system (column 14, lines 51-52).

As per claim 33, Guinta et al disclose performing an onsite assessment directed to one or more problem areas determined to be present in the organizational process or system, wherein one or more onsite assessor are provided with a list of the problem areas and a list of the corrective actions input (column 14, lines 55-58).

As per claim 35, Guinta et al disclose the results of the onsite assessment are input into the computer and stored in the computer's memory (figure 4).

As per claim 36, Guinta et al disclose the results provided by each onsite assessor are adjusted by a bias value identified for that assessor (i.e., a plurality of inputs from various assessors are used to calculate one or more standard deviations and compared with each other for evaluation purposes, column 8, lines 25-29).

As per claim 37, Guinta et al disclose analyzing the inputs comprises comparing input from two or more assessors to one another (i.e., 100 different issues assessed by 10 different assessors, with average multiplied evaluation factor of 55%, with only 8 issues below 45%, column 14, lines 51-55).

As per claim 39, Guinta et al disclose comparing input from two or more similar questions to one another (i.e., 100 different issues assessed by 10 different assessors, with average multiplied evaluation factor of 55%, with only 8 issues below 45%, column 14, lines 51-55).

Claims 40-47, 49, and 52 are rejected based upon the rejection of claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 2, 6-8, 38, and 31, respectively, since they are the apparatus claims corresponding to the method claims.

Claims 53-57 and 61-64 are rejected based upon the rejection of claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 2, 2, 6, 7, and 31, respectively, since they are the computer readable medium (claim 53) and apparatus claims (54-57 and 61-64) corresponding to the method claims.

As per claim 71, Guinta et al disclose a method of using a computer system to gather information about an organizational process or system (column 2, lines 39-40), comprising: obtaining information about the organization to be accessed, wherein the information comprises information regarding potential assessors (i.e., assessor being someone who has knowledge about the organizational process or system, which inherently indicates that information was obtained regarding the assessor, that indicated that the assessor indeed had knowledge of the organizational process or system to be assessed, column 5, lines 62-63), preparing and sending to the assessor at least one question regarding the organizational process or system by analyzing the obtained information about the organization (i.e., computer driven questions adapted to prompt the assessor, column 5, lines 58-60); identifying one or more assessors from the obtained potential assessor information (i.e., someone who has at least some knowledge about the organizational process or system, column 5, lines 62-63); displaying on a display device of the at least one assessor at least one question (column 5, lines 51-53) adapted to prompt the

assessor to input on an input device of a computer the assessor's perceptions of the organizational process or system, wherein the assessor has at least some knowledge about the organizational process or system (column 5, lines 58-63); receiving a first input from an input device, the first input reflecting the assessor's perception of the organizational process or system (column 6, lines 1-6); comparing within a processing unit of a computer the first input to a first value (column 6, lines 7-9), and, if the first input has a first predetermined characteristic in relation to the first values, then prompting the assessor to identify evidence that supports the first input (column 6, lines 9-13), and if the supporting evidence is identified, then validating the first input for subsequent evaluation (column 6, lines 13-16), and if the supporting evidence is not identified, then inhibiting validation of the first input until the evidence is identified or until the first input is changed to have second predetermined characteristics in relation to the values (column 6, lines 16-21).

Guinta et al does not explicitly disclose wherein obtaining the information regarding potential assessors comprises the computer system generating at least one question configured to identify at least one person with knowledge pertinent to an assessment. Barton discloses respective process owners (i.e., assessors) identified for interviews during which a questionnaire regarding compliance is completed (¶ 0057). Both Guinta et al and Barton et al are concerned with organizational and compliance assessment with respect to specific issues and risks, therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include obtaining the information regarding potential

assessors comprises the computer system generating at least one question configured to identify at least one person with knowledge pertinent to an assessment in Guinta et al, as seen in Barton et al, thereby effectively determining an effective assessor, thus making the system more robust and flexible.

Claims 72, 73, 91, 108, and 112 are rejected based upon the same rational as the rejection of claims 4, 3, 38, 34, and 38, respectively.

Claims 78-90, 92-99, 102, 103-107, and 109-111 are rejected based upon the same rationale as the rejections of claims 2, 6, 7, 1, 8-16, 17-24, 28-33, and 35-37, respectively.

Claims 144 and 145 are rejected based upon the rejection of claim 1 since they are the system claims corresponding to the method claim.

6. Claims 25-27, 48, 50, 51, 58-60, 74-77, 100 and 101 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guinta et al (USPN 5,737,494), in view of Barton et al, in further view of Mann et al (US 2002/0019765).

As per claims 25-27, neither Guinta et al nor Barton et al disclose preparing an assessment timeline based on assessor input, notifying the assessor of a deadline identified in the assessment timeline, and escalating a notification to one or more predetermined individuals if a response is not received from an assessor within a predetermined period of time. Mann et al disclose an evaluation database 5 to track the progress of an evaluation, including a deadline for completing the evaluation 903 (¶ 0061), and an administrator to track the status of the evaluations (¶ 0063). Guinta

et al, Barton et al, and Mann et al are concerned with effective performance evaluation of an organization. Further, tracking the progress of the assessors in Guinta et al provides an organization with an overall status of the evaluation (as disclosed in Mann et al, ¶ 0063), therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include preparing a timeline and notifying the assessor of a deadline in Guinta et al, as seen in Mann et al, thus making the assessment process in Guinta et al more efficient.

Claims 48, 50, and 51 are rejected based upon the rejection of claims 25, 26, and 27, respectively, since they are the apparatus claims corresponding to the method claims.

Claims 58-60 are rejected based upon the rejection of claims 25-27, respectively, since they are the apparatus claims corresponding to the method claims.

As per claims 74-77, neither Guinta et al, nor Barton et al disclose sending at least one warning notification prior to sending the prepared questions, sending at least one reminder notification if answers are not received within a predetermined period of time, sending the at least one prepared question to a different assessor if answers are not received within a predetermined period of time, and sending at least one reminder notification to an assessor's supervisor if answers are not received within a predetermined period of time. Mann et al discloses a to do form 800, wherein information regarding any manager evaluation to be completed is displayed (¶ 0060). In addition, the to do form 800 can be interactive so that the user can launch tasks required to complete the evaluation. Guinta et al, Barton et al, and

Mann et al are concerned with effective performance evaluation of an organization. Further, tracking the progress of the assessors in Guinta et al provides an organization with an overall status of the evaluation (as disclosed in Mann et al, ¶ 0063), therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include sending at least one warning notification prior to sending the prepared questions and sending at least one reminder notification in Guinta et al, as seen in Mann et al, thus making the assessment process in Guinta et al more efficient.

Claims 100 and 101 are rejected based upon the same rationale as the rejection of claims 25 and 26, respectively.

7. Claims 65, 66, 69, 70, 113, 114, and 118-122 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guinta et al (USPN 5,737,494).

As per claim 65, Guinta et al disclose a displaying a first user adjustable icon with a first allowed input range (i.e., sliding bar indicating a response to how well does your process address this issue, figure 5A), receiving a first input from a user, the first input corresponding to movement of an indicator on the first user adjustable icon, wherein a maximum value of the first input is greater than zero, (i.e., how well does your process address the issue, determined via sliding bar, with a maximum value of 100%, figure 5E), determining a second allowed input range for a second user adjustable icon based on the first input (i.e., sliding bar indicating a response to how well is your process deployed, figure 5E); displaying the second user adjustable

icon, with the second allowed input range (i.e., the second allowed range being 0-100%, indicates how well a system is deployed, figure 5E), and receiving a second input from the user, the second input corresponding to movement of an indicator on the second user adjustable icon (i.e., input determined via sliding bar, figure 5E).

Guinta et al does not explicitly disclose wherein the second input is equal to or greater than the maximum value of the first input. However, Guinta et al disclose a second numerical input indicating how extensively a process or system is deployed (column 7, lines 39-41), wherein the second input may be relatively low in comparison to the first input. As such, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the second input is equal to or greater than the maximum value of the first input in Guinta et al, as an effective means of determining the necessary corrective action to implement, thus making Guinta et al more robust and flexible.

As per claim 113, Guinta et al disclose a method of using a computer to gather information about an organizational process or system (column 2, lines 39-40), comprising: obtaining information about an organization to be accessed, wherein the information comprises information regarding assessors (i.e., assessor being someone who has knowledge about the organizational process or system, which inherently indicates that information was obtained regarding the assessor, that indicated that the assessor indeed had knowledge of the organizational process or system to be assessed, column 5, lines 62-63); preparing at least one question regarding the organizational process or system by analyzing the obtained

information about the organization (i.e., computer driven questions adapted to prompt the assessor, column 5, lines 58-60); displaying on a display device a first user adjustable icon (i.e., sliding bar indicating a response to how well does your process address this issue, figure 5A) and a second user adjustable icon (i.e., sliding bar indicating a response to how well is your process deployed, figure 5E); and, wherein the at least one question being adapted to prompt the assessor to input the assessor's perceptions of the organizational process or system; receiving a first input from a user, the first input corresponding to movement of the first user adjustable icon, wherein the first input is greater than zero (i.e., how well does your process address the issue, determined via sliding bar with a maximum value of 100%, figure 5E); determining a second allowed input range for a second user adjustable icon based on the first input (i.e., the second allowed range being 0-100%, indicates how well a system is deployed, figure 5E); receiving a second input from the user, the second input corresponding to movement of the second user adjustable icon (i.e., input determined via sliding bar, figure 5E).

Guinta et al does not explicitly disclose wherein the second input is equal to or greater than the maximum value of the first input. However, Guinta et al disclose a second numerical input indicating how extensively a process or system is deployed (column 7, lines 39-41), wherein the second input may be relatively low in comparison to the first input. As such, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the second input is equal to or greater than the maximum value of the first input in Guinta et al,

as an effective means of determining the necessary corrective action to implement, thus making Guinta et al more robust and flexible.

As per claim 114, Guinta et al disclose the first user adjustable icon comprises a sliding bar icon (column 6, lines 30-32).

As per claim 118, Guinta et al disclose the second user adjustable icon comprises a sliding bar icon (figure 5E).

As per claim 119, Guinta et al disclose the first input corresponds to the users perception of an aspect of a process or system in a present state (column 6, lines 36-41).

As per claim 120, Guinta et al disclose the second input corresponds to the users estimate of an aspect of a process or system in a projected future state.

As per claim 121, Guinta et al disclose setting a minimum allowed value (i.e., 0%) or the second allowed input range to be equal to the first input.

As per claim 122, Guinta et al disclose setting a maximum allowed value (i.e., 100%) or the second allowed input range to be equal to the first input.

Claims 66, 69, and 70 are rejected based upon the rejection of claims 114, 115, and 118, respectively, since they are the apparatus claims corresponding to the method claims.

8. Claims 67, 68, 115-117, 123-134 and 138-143 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guinta et al (USPN 5,737,494), as applied to claims 65 and 113, in further view of Barton et al (US 2002/0059093).

As per claims 67 and 68, Guinta et al does not disclose displaying remotely and displaying the at least one question across a global computer network. Barton et al disclose centralized database 18 stored remotely from server 12, wherein database 18 is checked out to PDA. Further, once the data has been modified through the PDA, the data can be re-checked into database 18 from the PDA (¶ 0049). Both Guinta et al and Barton et al are concerned with gathering information concerning the performance of an organization. In addition, a wide area network, such as the internet, provides an opportunity to quickly and efficiently gather information, particularly where an organization may have various offices, therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include displaying the interface remotely and across a network, and including a PDA in Guinta et al, as seen in Barton et al, as an efficient means of delivering the information to the assessor in the Guinta et al system.

Claims 115-117, 123-134, and 138-143 are rejected based upon the same rational as the rejection of claims 5, 3, 4, 2, 37, 39, 6, 7, 10, 15, 16, 38, 17-19, 30, and 32-36, as seen above.

9. Claims 135-137 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guinta et al (USPN 5,737,494), as applied to claims 65 and 113, in further view of Mann et al (US 2002/0019765).

As per claims 135-137, neither Guinta et al nor Barton et al disclose preparing an assessment timeline based on assessor input, notifying the assessor of a deadline

identified in the assessment timeline, and escalating a notification to one or more predetermined individuals if a response is not received from an assessor within a predetermined period of time. Mann et al disclose an evaluation database 5 to track the progress of an evaluation, including a deadline for completing the evaluation 903 (¶ 0061), and an administrator to track the status of the evaluations (¶ 0063). Guinta et al, Barton et al, and Mann et al are concerned with effective performance evaluation of an organization. Further, tracking the progress of the assessors in Guinta et al provides an organization with an overall status of the evaluation (as disclosed in Mann et al, ¶ 0063), therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include preparing a timeline and notifying the assessor of a deadline in Guinta et al, as seen in Mann et al, thus making the assessment process in Guinta et al more efficient.

Response to Arguments

10. In the Remarks, Applicant argues, with respect to claim 71, that Guinta et al does not teach obtaining information about the organization to be assessed, wherein the information comprises information regarding potential assessors, wherein obtaining the information regarding potential assessors comprises the computer system generating at least one question configured to identify at least one person with knowledge pertinent to an assessment. The Examiner submits that Barton discloses respective process owners (i.e., assessors) identified for interviews during which a

questionnaire regarding compliance is completed (¶ 0057), therefore Guinta et al in view of Barton indeed disclose the claimed invention.

With respect to claim 1, Applicant argues that neither Guinta et al nor Barton disclose prompting an assessor to select at least two standards against which to assess the organizational process or system, wherein at least one of the two selected standards is a recognized industry standard prescribing system or process criteria and wherein the recognized industry standard is selected based on the general information about the organization process or system. The Examiner respectfully disagrees and submits that Barton discloses compliance assessment areas 102, including CTQ measurements and the following of international trade controls, as seen in figure 4, and government agency regulation, as seen in figure 12. As such, Barton indeed discloses at least one of the two selected standards is a recognized industry standard prescribing system or process criteria and wherein the recognized industry standard is selected based on the general information about the organization process or system. Moreover, compliance assessment areas 102 are areas being reviewed for compliance, which include more than two areas, as seen in figure 4, therefore Barton indeed discloses prompting an assessor to select at least two standards against which to assess the organizational process or system.

With respect to claims 30 and 31, Applicant argues that Guinta does not disclose prompting an assessor to provide recommendations to improve the organizational process or wherein selecting a value on a first user adjustable icon limits the range of values displayed for selection on a second user adjustable icon. The Examiner

respectfully disagrees and submits that Guinta discloses an on-site evaluation team directed to focus on specific issues, wherein information collected via a computer system. In addition, Guinta discloses a sliding bar scale (figure 5E), showing the input second user adjustable icon (i.e., "How well is your process deployed?") range between 20%-80%.

With respect to claims 27 and 75-77 Applicant argues that Mann does not appear to teach escalating a notification to one or more predetermined individuals if a response is not received from an assessor within a predetermined period of time, sending at least one reminder notification if answers are not received within a predetermined period of time, sending the at least one prepared question to a different assessor if answers are not received within a predetermined period of time, and sending at least one reminder notification to an assessor's supervisor if answers are not received within a predetermined period of time. The Examiner respectfully disagrees and submits that Mann discloses an evaluation database 5 to track the progress of an evaluation, including a deadline (i.e., predetermined period of time) for completing the evaluation 903 (¶ 0061), an administrator to track the status of the evaluations (¶ 0063), and a to do form 800, wherein information regarding any manager evaluation to be completed is displayed (¶ 0060), wherein the to do form 800 can be interactive so that the user can launch tasks required to complete the evaluation (i.e., reminder notification if answers are not received within a predetermined period of time). Moreover, Mann discloses adding additional managers 909 that would be able to track the status of the evaluation if it's not

completed by the deadline (figure 9), thus disclosing sending the at least one prepared question to a different assessor if answers are not received within a predetermined period of time, and sending at least one reminder notification to an assessor's supervisor if answers are not received within a predetermined period of time.

Conclusion

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andre Boyce whose telephone number is (571) 272-6726. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:30-6pm M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

adb
March 18, 2007

CB
ANDREW BYRNE
PATENT EXAMINER
A.U. 3623